



Runge Conservation Nature Center

Habitat Happenings

2010
January/February



The Greek letter Delta, symbolized by a triangle (Δ), represents *change* in mathematics. The Missouri Department of Conservation is symbolized by a triangle, too. A leaf, a fish, and a raccoon are found within the triangle and refer to our mandate for managing the forest, fish, and wildlife resources in Missouri. It is fitting that the triangle represents both change and natural resources because responsible resource management often requires creativity and change – accepting change, working through change, and moving forward in the presence of change.

Runge CNC endeavors to connect people emotionally to the natural resources and through this connection we enable people to get involved personally with the stewardship of our resources. Those of us who are fortunate enough to work at Runge feel strongly about providing high quality opportunities for nature experiences to those in our community and throughout the state. We believe in and love what we do! But, change is ever present to challenge our thinking and actions. Now is no different. These are tough times economically and our nature center staffing has been reduced so we will be making some changes.

Δ 's at RCNC

1. New Building Hours

- (8am-5pm) Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday
- (8am-8pm) Thursday
- Closed Sunday and Monday

2. New Area Hours

- 6am-9pm year round

3. Programming

- Some events will be downsized and some will be cancelled
- Watch the newsletter for details or call the nature center

4. Newsletter

- *Habitat Happenings* will be getting a facelift to reduce costs
- We encourage you to sign up for the e-newsletter (<http://mdc.mo.gov/2344>) to save paper and shipping costs

These changes will be implemented March 1, 2010. Change is an opportunity to grow and these changes will allow us to ensure high quality programming and better focus on our mission to connect Missourians to nature. These changes reflect many factors including your thoughts and comments. Feel free to contact the nature center if you have any suggestions or comments on how we are meeting your needs.

The next time you see a triangle, take a moment to consider the need for change in all we do.

Kathy Cavender, Manager

Volunteer Lobby Exhibit

~January/February~

Caves In Crisis

The following **VOLUNTEER** Naturalists were recognized recently for their contributions to the programs at Runge. Please congratulate them the next time you see them.

- 100 hours** – Jenna Anthony, Holly Grantham, Don Heidbreder, and Anna Nowack
200 hours – Claudia Arnold, Catrina Livergood and Larry Young
300 hours – Jacob Schulte

Runge volunteers and staff celebrated the many programs, events, and projects that took place this past year at our annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony in early December. Using the theme of ***The ABC's of Volunteering***, the following volunteers received special awards.



Volunteer of the Year, Kent Hillman, receiving his award from Robin Grumm, volunteer coordinator.



Holly Grantham being presented with the **Work-aholic Volunteer Award** for the volunteer who is steadfast and often silent, working behind-the-scenes.



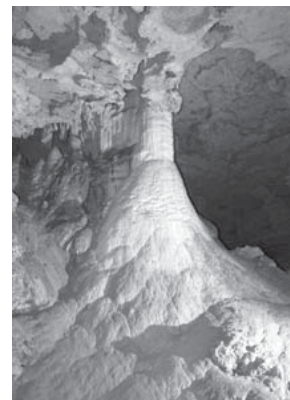
Carol Young being presented with the **eXtraordinary Volunteer Award** for the volunteer who goes the extra mile and show exemplary work.



Jacob Schulte, being presented with the **Youth Volunteer Award**.

The "Caves in Crisis" exhibit contrasts the beauty of Missouri caves and cave life with vandalism, restoration and conservation. This is an opportunity through art, for education and preservation of a sensitive and treasured natural community. Come view the spectacular photographs through January and February.

Contributing cave photographers: William R. Elliott, David Bunnell, Jim Huckins, Rickard Walk, and Michael Carter.



Z
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For the little ones



Connect with nature through exciting and age-appropriate opportunities.

"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in." ~Rachel Carson (1907-1964) naturalist, writer, environmentalist

Little Acorns

Children 3 through 6 years of age are welcome to attend a Little Acorns program with their caregiver. This program is limited to 20 children, plus a caregiver.

January

Call 573/526-5544 on or after January 2nd to make your reservation.

King of Birds

Missouri is the winter home for hundreds of bald eagles. This month is a great time to see them and to learn more about them. What do they eat? How much do they weigh? How many feathers do they have? Where do they nest? Find the answers to these questions and more at our program this month. Reservations required.

Little Acorns

Saturday, January 9 – 10:00AM

Tuesday, January 12 – 1:00PM

Thursday, January 28 – 10:00AM



February

Call 573/526-5544 on or after February 1st to make your reservation.

Animal Wrappers

Animals definitely should NOT wear clothes! What exactly do animals "wear"? This month we will examine the coverings of various animals and figure out why animals do not need to wear clothes. Reservations required.



Little Acorns

Thursday, February 11 – 10:00AM

Saturday, February 13 – 10:00AM

Tuesday, February 16 – 1:00PM

Babes In The Woods and Little Acorns PLUS programs are taking time off. We will return in the spring with fresh new programs for the youngest among us. Watch for those dates in the March/April newsletter.

Conservation Kids' Club

Welcome to Conservation Kids' Club, a fun club created for kids 6 through 12 years old who love to explore nature and learn about wildlife.

When you make your reservation (573/526-5544), please provide the name of each member, their age, and the number of siblings attending the Little Acorns program to help us better prepare. Thank you.



Owl Pellets

Tuesday, January 19– 6:30-8:00PM

(Make your reservation between January 2 and January 15.)

Tonight you are an owl scientist. Your job is to discover what Missouri owls eat. You will pick apart an owl pellet, examine the bones, and try to assemble the prey skeleton. Our Missouri owls depend on YOU knowing what they eat to survive.

Tracking Down Tracks and Scat

Tuesday, February 16– 6:30-8:00PM

(Make your reservation between February 1 and February 12.)

Tonight you are a wildlife tracker. Your job is to discover the animal who left the tracks and scat behind. Join us for an evening of animal adventure.

Fill in the missing letters to find out what animal tracks you might find in Missouri.

be__v__r

wild__rkey

bu__fr_g

spotte__ku_k

b_bc_t

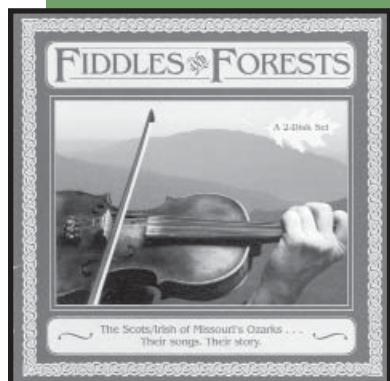
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Hey, Parents!

While big brother/sister attends Conservation Kids' Club, your preschooler (3 through 6 years of age) can be involved in a program at the same time. A preschool program will be available for **siblings** of Conservation Kids' Club members on **Tuesday, January 19th and Tuesday, February 16th**. **Parents, please limit your Little Acorn reservations to one program each month.**

Nature Shop News

January/February featured item



20% OFF

Former Conservation Department educator and fiddle player, Mike Fraser, brings Missouri's Scots-Irish folk history to life with this spirited mix of Celtic jigs, foot-stomping Ozark bluegrass and narrative enhanced by nature sounds. The two-disc set features the story and songs on one disc and the music alone on the other.

Discounted Price:

\$7.20

Heritage card discount does not apply.

Participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count

Joint project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon

February 12-15

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent and in Hawaii. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy—and it helps the birds. For more information visit <http://www.nwf.org/naturequest/birdcount.cfm>



Scout Programs

Make your reservation by calling 573/526-5544 beginning January 2nd.

January 12^{Tuesday} or **January 13**^{Wednesday}
6:00-7:00PM

Wildlife Badge

Ages: Scout - Brownies

Reservations are required.

January 23^{Saturday} 1:00-4:00PM

Scout Table: State Symbols (self-guided exhibit)

Ages: All

Visit the nature center today with your scout and work on a part of a badge. Join us as we are "drawn" into the flag of Missouri, discover the state symbols that surround us and more. **Wolf:** Your Flag (achievement 2d); **Bears:** What Makes America Special? (achievement 3e); **Juniors:** Let's Go Outdoors (Wildlife 1). No reservations required.

January 26^{Tuesday} or **January 27**^{Wednesday}
6:00-7:00PM

Earth is Our Home Try-It

Ages: Scout - Brownies

Reservations are required.

Make your reservation by calling 573/526-5544 beginning February 1st.

February 23^{Tuesday} or **February 24**^{Wednesday}
6:00-7:00PM

Bear Achievement #5

Ages: Scouts - Bear Cubs

Reservations are required.

Scout Packs!

Runge Nature Center is happy to offer assistance in meeting requirements for some nature-related scout badges. We have a variety of scout packs available with activities and information to assist you in your efforts. Please contact Alane at 573/526-5544 ext 3409 for more information or to reserve one of the following scout packs.

Girl Scouts

Brownie: Animals Try-It

Plants Try-It

Boy Scouts:

Wolf Cub: Elective #13 - Birds

Bear Cub: Achievement #5 - Sharing Your World with Wildlife

Webelos: Naturalist & Forester Pack(s) Your choice of packs or a combination pack that has both badge requirements.

January Events

To make a reservation, call after **8:00 AM** on **January 2nd** to register for these programs (573/526-5544). If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible, so someone on the waiting list may attend. Thank you.

9 Saturday 8:00AM-Noon **The Runge Hiking Club**

Ages: 18 years and older

Learn about our wondrous state! Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails.

Come join us for our annual New Year's hike. It's a tradition! We'll car pool to **Painted Rock State Forest** to hike the **Osage Bluff Scenic Trail** (1.6 miles, ****), one of the most interesting and scenic trails in the state. We'll warm up by hiking to the 140-foot-high bluffs, then down to the river level, and back up for magnificent views of the Osage River valley. We'll see ancient cedars, view remnants of a Native American burial cairn, and have a 50/50 chance of spotting a bald eagle. Bring water and hiking boots or comfortable shoes. Reservations required.

14 Thursday 7:00-8:00PM **Hummingbirds! Beauty and the Beast**

Ages: Adults

Join the River Bluffs Audubon Society as they watch the movie "*Hummingbirds! Beauty and the Beast*" featuring 57 hummer species, including all 16 that breed in the United States, with unique, frequently unobserved behaviors. Sponsored by the River Bluffs Audubon Society. No reservations required.

15 Friday 6:30-8:00PM

DISCOVER nature FAMILIES
Discover Nature Families: Owl Prowl
Ages: All

Whoooo's there? Missouri owls! Explore the fascinating lives of these winged nighttime hunters. Following the indoor program, we will take a short walk to look and listen for owls on our trails. Dress for the weather. Reservations required.

16 Saturday 10:00AM **Story Tree**

Ages: All

The Story Tree abounds with fun; the branches run amok. We'll have books to read and animals to see. Come join us for the fun and listen to our tales. No reservations required.

18 Monday 10:00AM-3:00PM **Cabin Fever Day**

Ages: All

Get out of the house and enjoy all that Runge has to offer. We'll provide activities for kids of all ages with movies, music, and more. Make Runge your escape from cabin fever this month! No reservations required.

20 Wednesday 8:00AM-5:30PM **Midweek Trekkers**

Ages: 18 years and older

Runge Midweek Trekkers is a volunteer-led program designed to provide opportunities for people to hike Missouri trails and learn about our plants, animals, and natural communities. Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails.

This month, we'll travel to one of our most popular state parks—**Bennett Spring**. We'll hike the **Natural Tunnel Trail** (7.5 miles, ***) to find a 296-foot-long S-shaped tunnel—one of the largest, most beautiful (and largely unknown) natural tunnels in the state. Bring a small pack, your lunch, water, and hiking boots or comfortable shoes. We will eat lunch on the trail. Bring a flashlight if you want to explore inside the tunnel. Also, come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

21 Thursday 10:30AM-Noon or 6:00-7:30PM

Nature's Needlers

Ages: 18 years and older

We start off the New Year with the first of the "What's in our backyard?" theme. We will focus on one of Missouri's winged mammals, the little brown bat. Join us as we learn about this fascinating and very unusual backyard resident and create a patchwork block. Reservations required.

21 Thursday 7:00-8:00PM **Caves in Crisis**

Ages: All

William R. Elliott, the Conservation Department's Cave Biologist, will present a program discussing Missouri caves, cave life, and White Nose syndrome, a new disease in bats. Following the program, he will lead a tour and discussion of the "Caves in Crisis" photography exhibit located in the nature center's lobby. No reservations required.

23 Saturday 8:00AM-2:00PM **Wilderness Walks**

Ages: 18 years and older

The goal of this new program is to leisurely explore, identify, and thoroughly enjoy nature's beautiful surroundings. Meet at the nature center and carpool to the location. A volunteer naturalist will lead the hikes and the interpretive program. The second of our four seasonal walks will take place at **Three Creeks Conservation Area** (3-4 miles, ****).

We will focus on winter tree identification, discuss local geology, and identify and age fossils. Bring extra water and a cup, HOT drinks will be served on the trail. Reservations required.

26 Tuesday 6:30-8:00PM **Owl Prowl**

Ages: Adults

Whoooo's there? Missouri owls! Explore the fascinating lives of these winged nighttime hunters. Following the indoor program, we will take a short walk to look and listen for owls on our trails. Dress for the weather. Reservations required.

28 Thursday 7:00-9:00PM **Backpacking Basics**

Ages: 10 years and older (16 years and under must be accompanied by an adult.)

Have you ever wanted to venture into the woods for 4 or 5 days with all that you need to survive carried on your back, and no restrictions on your travel other than where your feet will take you? Learn the basics of backpacking in the great outdoors. We'll cover types of gear, food, water, planning, resources for planning, minimum impact hiking, and best of all we'll sample a little "backpacking" food. Reservations required.

30 Saturday 10:00AM-Noon **Backpacking Basics**

Ages: 10 years and older (16 years and under must be accompanied by an adult.)

Refer to January 28th for description. Reservations required.

Trail rating system

- *Easiest Trail (flat terrain with no obstructions)
- **Slight inclines and/or few obstructions (gravel, few rocks)
- ***Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks or roots
- ****Occasional significant inclines and/or rocks or roots
- *****Most difficult (significant inclines, obstructions, and/or loose rocks)

February Events

To make a reservation, call after 8:00AM on **February 1st** to register for these programs (573/526-5544). If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible, so someone on the waiting list may attend. Thank you.

3 Wednesday 8:00AM–5:00PM

Midweek Trekkers

Ages: 18 years and older

This month we will visit **Prairie Home Conservation Area** that straddles Cooper and Moniteau counties, and is a 1,461-acre mosaic of hardwood forests, old fields, prairies, creeks, and small ponds. We'll listen and watch for bobwhite, turkey, deer, and other wildlife residents as we hike approximately 7 miles (***) on one of the trails. Bring your lunch, water, and hiking boots or comfortable shoes. Also, come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

5 Friday 1:00–2:30PM

Homeschool: Winter Tree I.D.

Ages: 12 years and older

Think winter is a bad time to learn about trees? It couldn't be more exciting! We'll learn how to identify trees without leaves, discover what they are doing during this cold weather and more. Come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

11 Thursday 7:00–8:00PM

Missouri Birds

Ages: Adults

Join Dave Murphy, Executive Director of the Conservation Federation of Missouri, as he addresses several topics including the *Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative* and the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation's involvement with the *Avian Conservation Alliance of the Americas*. A discussion of *Birds, Bats and Wind Power* will also take place. Program sponsored by the River Bluffs Audubon Society. No reservations required.

13 Saturday 1:00–4:00PM

I ♥ Slimy Salamanders

Ages: All

Salamanders are on the move this month and looking for love in the muckiest of places. Join us as we celebrate these strange and slimy amphibians and put your heart into learning about them this Valentine's weekend. No reservations required.

Noon–4:00 Lobby activities, featuring crafts, games, and live animals on display.

1:00–1:30 Salamanders of Missouri program

3:00 Salamander habitat hike

15 Monday 10:00AM–3:00PM

Cabin Fever Day

Ages: All

Get out of the house and enjoy all that Runge has to offer. We'll provide activities for kids of all ages with movies, music, and more. Make Runge your escape from cabin fever this month! No reservations required.

18 Thursday 10:30AM–Noon
or 6:00–7:30PM

Nature's Needlers

Ages: 18 years and older

Second in our "What's in our backyard?" series is the Lady Bird Beetle. Commonly known as the ladybug, each of these voracious feeders can gobble as many as 2,000 greenflies in it's lifetime. We will learn why color plays such an important part in the ladybug's life and other interesting insect trivia. We will create a patchwork block to add to the series. Reservations required.

20 Saturday 8:00AM–5:00PM

The Runge Hiking Club

Ages: 18 years and older

Learn about our wondrous state! Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails.

Little Dixie Lake Conservation

Area is primarily forest and grassland.

The area received settlers from Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina which gave its name Little Dixie. We will hike 8 miles (***) through forest and prairie which will take us around the lake.

Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

21 Sunday 2:00PM

Story Tree

Ages: All

The Story Tree abounds with fun; the branches run amok. We'll have books to read and animals to see. Come join us for the fun and listen to our tales. No reservations required.



Save the date...

6th Annual

NATIVE PLANT SALE

March 27

10:00AM - 3:00PM

What is Nature's Needlers?

Nature's Needlers is a program offered by Runge volunteers who teach, instruct, and guide participants (ages 18 and over) in needlework inspired by Missouri's outdoors. Each month, participants assemble a nature block while learning fascinating information about the selected Missouri plant or animal.

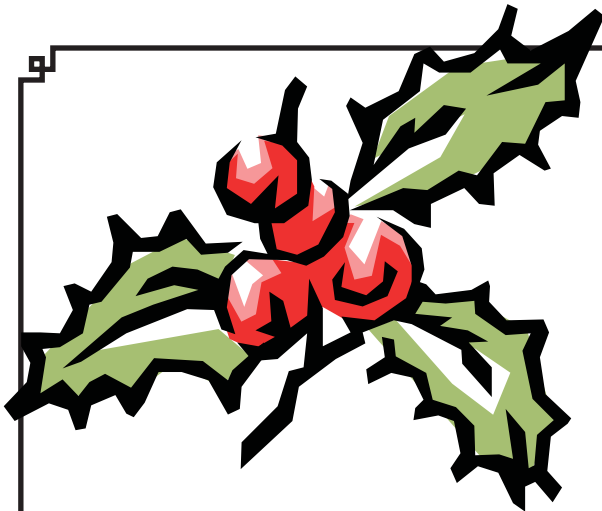
This year's focus will feature quilt blocks of plants and animals that can be found in our backyards. Please join us!



Habitat Happenings

Runge Conservation Nature Center
Missouri Department of Conservation
P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102

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Jefferson City Missouri
Permit No. 274



Don't forget ...

Holiday Happenings!

It's an open house type of event. Come anytime on Monday through Wednesday, between 10:00AM and 4:00PM.

Monday, December 28 is Game Day - Naturally. Come play nature games with us, inside and outside. From puzzles to bingo, Nature-boxing to Wheel-of-motion, the fun never stops.

Tuesday, December 29 is Eagle Day. Activities, movies, and crafts will teach you all about the Bald Eagle. Help us make a life-size eagle nest.

Wednesday, December 30 is Nature and the Arts. Enjoy and appreciate nature through stories, music, and other fine arts. Try your hand at a new artistic endeavor inspired by nature.

No reservations required for this event.